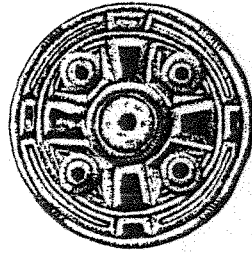


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Archaeological Field Unit

**Land off the High Street and Painters Lane, Sutton:  
An Archaeological Evaluation**

Andrew Hatton

2001

**Cambridgeshire County Council**

Report No. B89

Commissioned by Richard Hough Building Ltd

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An Archaeological Evaluation.**

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2001

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## **SUMMARY**

*On the 25th and 26 of June 2001 the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted an archaeological evaluation on land off High Street and Painters Lane, Sutton in advance of the construction of a number of dwellings and associated ground works. The aim of the investigation was to record and assess the nature of any archaeological evidence encountered prior to construction and hence to assess the potential for surviving remains. Given the subject site's location close to the High Street, the historic centre and the archaeological remains discovered at Red Lion Lane, special attention was paid to the identification and interpretation of deposits and features in the context of what seemed to be an area of high archaeological potential.*

*During the archaeological evaluation, probable quarrying activity and extensive modern disturbance was observed, thus potentially removing any evidence of early land use.*

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**Land off the High Street and Painters Lane, Sutton:  
An Archaeological Evaluation  
(TL 4395/7870)**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

On the 25th and 26th June 2001 the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) undertook an archaeological evaluation on land off the High Street and Painter Lane, Sutton (TL 4395/7870), (Fig. 1). The work was carried out to satisfy a planning condition (Application No. E/01/00118, E/01/00117) in advance of development.

**2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

The site lies on glacial sand and gravel (BGS sheet 173) which were encountered over all the area investigated. The ground slopes steeply down from the northwest to southeast with the highest point measured at 25.9m AOD and the lowest point being 15m AOD.

**3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

In a wider context the village of Sutton is located on the western edge of the Isle of Ely on a spur of high ground.

Important prehistoric remains have been found in the parish of Sutton, most from the rises and islands of lighter soil lying in the fens, particularly North Fen and Sutton Meadlands to the west of the village. An important Long Barrow is located approximately 1kilometre to the southwest of the village and a second has been observed on aerial photographs (Hall, 1996).

Roman remains have been found in the vicinity of the village including a cremation (SMR 05744) found whilst cutting a drainage channel along Oates Lane which is approximately 600 metres to the east of the subject site. Other Roman remains have been found in the parish but these are largely unprovenanced.

Anglo-Saxon remains have been found in the parish but these are unprovenanced.

Medieval pottery has been found in the village as might be expected in a village which is listed in the Domesday Survey. The name Sutton means South Farm and may relate to its position in the Isle of Ely. The medieval village probably clustered around St. Andrew's Church and along the High Street.

**4 METHODOLOGY**

Seven evaluation trenches were excavated for a total length of 140m using a toothless ditching bucket 1.60m wide. They were located across the site in order to provide maximum coverage of the proposed development area.

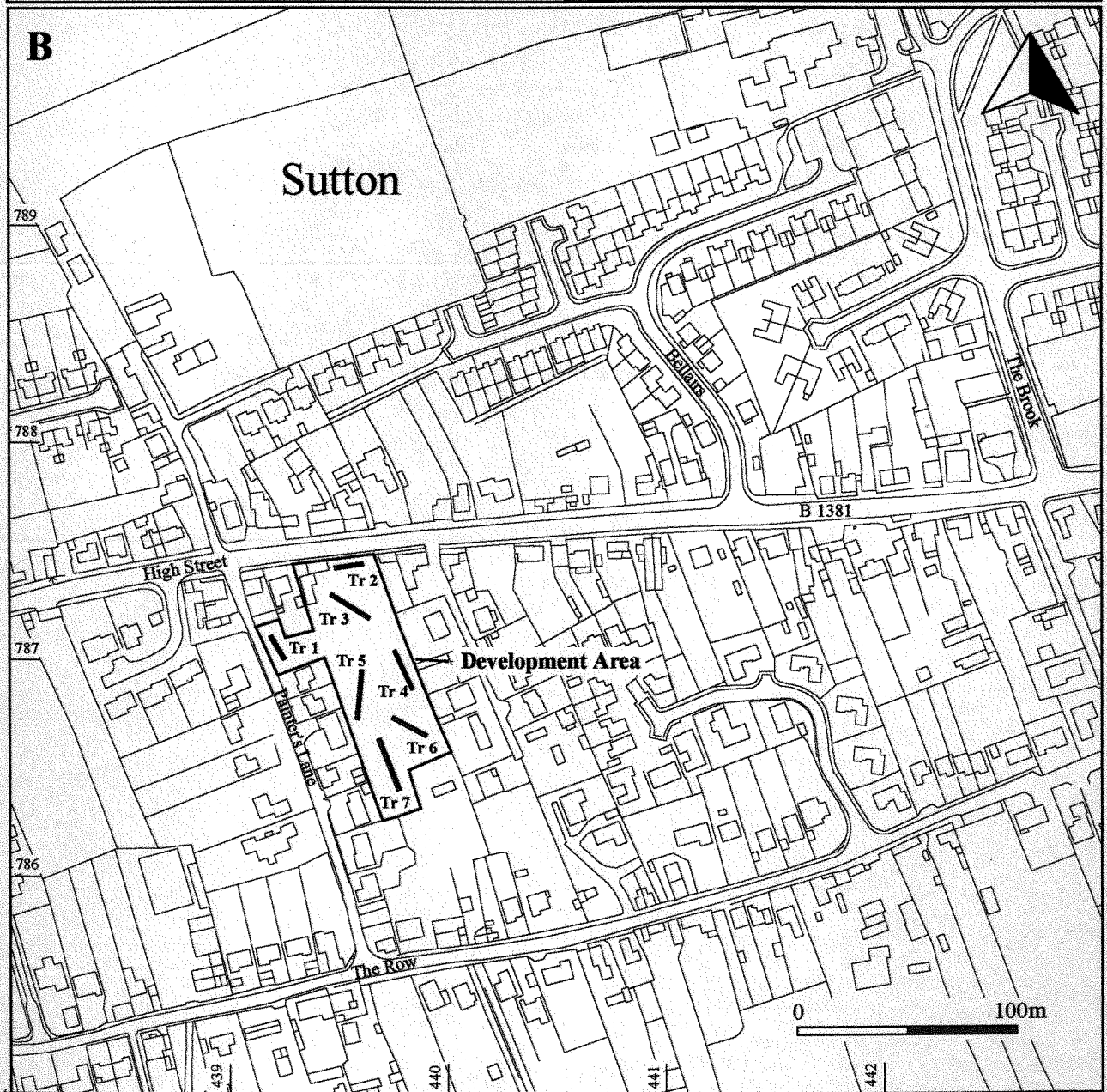
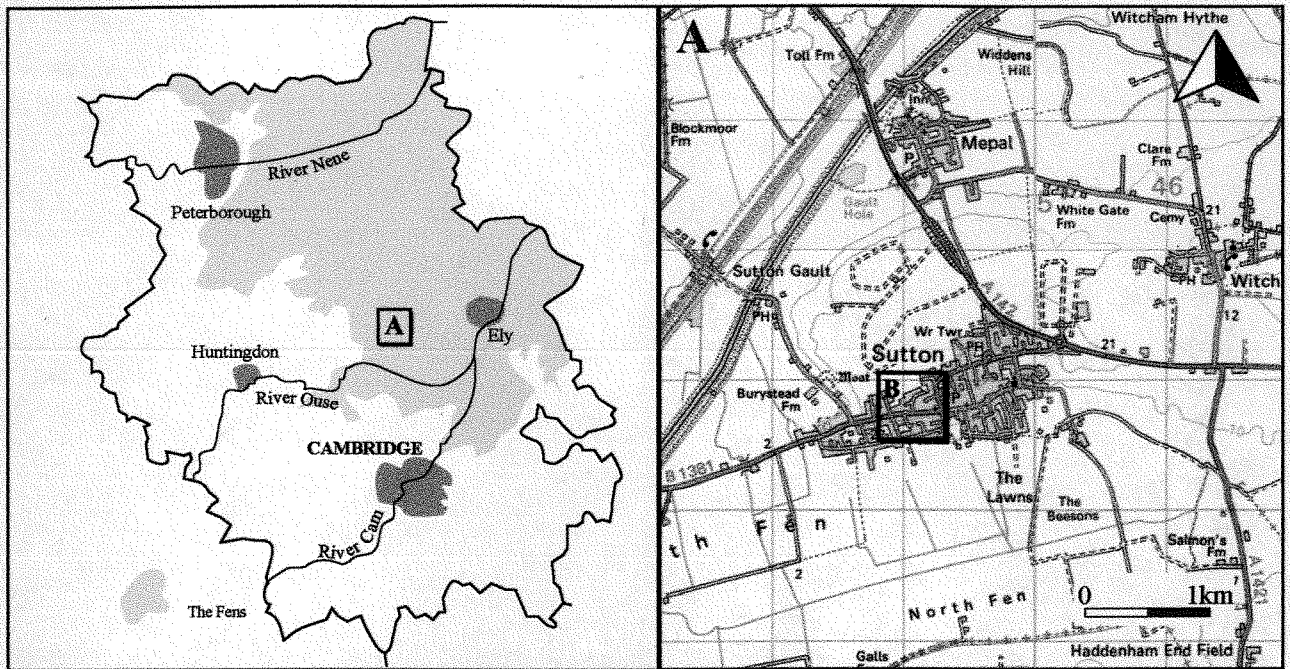


Figure 1 Site location

Based upon Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. (Cambridgeshire County Council licence No. LA 07649X 2001)

The trenches were hand cleaned, where necessary, photographed and base planned. Once identified, features were excavated, planned and recorded using the

AFU's standard recording system. Sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and excavated features photographed.

## 5 RESULTS (Fig. 1)

Trench 1 (15m x 1.6m), northwest/southeast oriented. The trench was excavated at the north-western end to a depth of 0.41m, through 0.05m of tarmac and 0.36m foundation material. Removal of the foundation material revealed the natural sandy gravel geology. The same stratigraphic sequence was encountered at the south-eastern end of the trench with the only difference being the thickness of the foundation material being measured at 0.20m. No archaeological features were observed in the trench.

Trench 2 (15m x 1.6m), west/east oriented. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth 0.80m (northern end) and a minimum depth of 0.59m (eastern end). The removal of road foundation material (0.59m thick) revealed a layer of mid-brown silty soil (0.30m thick). Beneath the silty soil a large feature (at the western end of the trench) was observed cutting into the natural sandy gravel geology which on excavation were found to contain modern debris. Moving in an easterly direction along the trench the natural sandy gravel geology was found to slope upwards. The trench section showed that the mid-brown silty soil decreased in thickness in accordance with the rise of the natural geology. The mid-brown silty soil was no longer visible in section at the eastern end of the trench leaving only the foundation material (0.59m thick) sealing the sandy gravel geology. No archaeological features were observed at the eastern end of the trench.

Trench 3 (20m x 1.6m), northwest/southeast oriented. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.58m (north-western end) and a minimum depth of 0.54m (south-eastern end). The removal of a layer of brick rubble (0.58m thick) at the north-western end of the trench revealed a black organic layer. At approximately 5m from the north-western end of the trench a test pit (2m wide) was cut through the organic deposit using the mechanical excavator as a way to identify the depth of the deposit and also recover any artefactual dating evidence. The organic deposit was found to be 0.67m in depth and contained fragments of late 18th, early 19th century pottery. The large cut feature continued along the trench for a further 7.7m at which point the natural sandy gravel geology was encountered. The natural geology at the south-eastern end of the trench was sealed by foundation rubble and modern debris 0.54m thick.

Trench 4 (20m x 1.6m), northeast/southwest oriented. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.72m (north-eastern end) and a minimum depth of 0.39m (south-western end). The removal of the dark brown silty topsoil (0.34m thick at the south-western end increasing to 0.50m thick at the north-eastern end) revealed a mid-brown sandy silt subsoil. Removal of the subsoil (which ranged in thickness between 0.05m at the south-western end and 0.22m at the north-eastern end) revealed the sandy gravel geology which had been heavily disturbed through tree root action. No archaeological evidence was identified in the trench.

Trench 5 (20m x 1.6m), northwest/southeast oriented. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.63m (south-eastern end) and a minimum depth of 0.57m (north-western end). The removal of the dark brown silty topsoil (0.33m thick at the south-eastern end increasing to 0.57m thick at the north-western end) revealed a mid-brown sandy silt subsoil. Removal of the subsoil (0.30m thick at the south-eastern end) revealed a single cut feature (see below). At the north-western end of

the trench the section showed no evidence for a subsoil suggesting a degree of soil creep occurring down slope.

**Cut 1.** 2.5m long, 0.57m wide (location of the trench baulk prevents an accurate measurement being taken), 0.09m deep, rectangular/square pit (?) with steep sides, contained one fill:

Fill 2, dark greyish brown sandy silt, with occasional flint pebble inclusions. Contained 1 fragment of hand-made brick, and 1 sherd of post medieval Ely Red Ware pottery (1700-1800).

Trench 6 (20.5m x 1.6m) northwest/southeast oriented. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.34m (north-western end) and a minimum depth of 0.29m (south-eastern end). The removal of the dark brown silty topsoil (0.29m thick at the south-eastern end increasing to 0.34m thick at the north-western end) revealed the natural sandy gravel geology, which had been heavily tree root damaged. No archaeological features was identified in this trench.

Trench 7 (30m x 1.6m) northwest/southeast oriented. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.59m (south-eastern end) and a minimum depth of 0.50m (north-western end). The removal of the dark brown silty topsoil (0.32m thick at the south-eastern end decreasing to 0.30m thick at the north-western end) revealed the natural sandy gravel geology. A row of five postholes were observed cutting into the geology, each of which were filled with modern topsoil, indicating a modern date for their excavation.

## 6 DISCUSSION/ CONCLUSION

The aims of the study were to highlight the potential for preservation of archaeological remains on the subject site and to identify the nature of any remains that may be affected by the proposed development. The development involves the excavation of foundation trenches, services and road construction.

The key issues specific to the site relate to its location to the historic core of Sutton centering on the parish church of St; Andrew c. fourteenth century, together with evidence gathered from the subject site and how it relates to recent archaeological discoveries at Red Lion Lane, Sutton (Hatton, forthcoming). Evaluation trenches revealed revealed no archaeological features earlier than c. seventeenth-eighteenth century, which consisted of postholes and a single rectangular/square shallow pit.

The reason for the lack of pre- seventeenth-eighteenth archaeological remains century can be attributed to extensive quarrying activities taking place on the subject site, which would also explain the steep inclination of the land down slope away from the High Street.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The brief for archaeological works was written by Andy Thomas, County Archaeology Office, who visited the site and monitored the evaluation.



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